



Family Court Project

LaPorte County

Basic Information

Population:	111,246
County Seat:	LaPorte
Judicial Officers:	Thomas J Alevizos
Date of Project Implementation:	2004
Project Judge/s:	Thomas J Alevizos
Administrative Contact:	Chip Cotman
Project Funding:	\$20,000.00

Family Court Mission Statement

Please provide a mission statement for your Family Court Programming

The mission of the La Porte Family Court is to improve the lives of children and families throughout La Porte County, using coordinated information, allowing for consistent court orders, utilizing appropriate services, and promoting family involvement in the ultimate resolution of matters pertaining to children

Family Court Programming

Please provide a description your Family Court Programming

LaPorte County's Family Court Project consists of several different areas; Access to Justice: Court staff assigned to family court will provide non-legal assistance to self-represented litigants in accessing legal forms through the Indiana Supreme Court Self Service Center in choosing the correct legal form(s) and assist in the preparation of those forms in domestic relations cases. The Family Court Project Coordinator is responsible for daily operations of two (2) Self Help Centers, one in LaPorte and One in Michigan City. Alternative Dispute Resolution: The Director of Juvenile Court Services and the Family Court Project Coordinator will coordinate referrals/walk-in ADR services by working with the Judges/Magistrates and with the County Clerk's Office. Case tracking: Originally, to be eligible to participate in the La Porte County Family Court Project families must have either a CHINS or a juvenile delinquency matter pending and at least one other matter pending before a La Porte County Court. As the La Porte County Family Court Project has evolved, families that have contentious CHINS or dissolution matters may be referred by the judicial officers or the parties themselves into Family Court. Once a referral has been made, the Family Court Project Coordinator reviews the Court Case Management System and Quest to determine whether or not the family meets the initial criteria for inclusion in the Project. The Family Court Project Coordinator compiles the data contained within the two databases about each of the pending matters (and for adult family members recently closed (i.e.

Indiana Supreme Court
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30 South Meridian Street, Suite 500
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within the last 5 years) criminal matters) into a preliminary report. The Family Court Project Coordinator review the preliminary report to determine whether or not the family will be included in the Project. If a family is accepted into the project, the Family Court Project Coordinator completes the necessary documentation. Each month the Family Court Project Coordinator updates the Family Court Roster and highlights the family court matters that will come before each judicial officer before sending it out to the Judge or Magistrate. Approximately one week prior to each hearing referred to in the Roster the Case Manager updates the Family Court Case Management Report and submits this electronically to the Judge or Magistrate, Service providers, DCS and public defenders/Private attorneys involved in the case(s). Court-Related Services: Project ATTEND focuses on the elementary grades in an attempt to solve the problem of truancy when it first arises. When a child has unexcused absences, the schools Attendance Officer/Administrator will have a conference with the student's parents/guardians and ask to have an Attendance Agreement signed. If an agreement is unable to be reached, the student is then referred to the LaPorte County Juvenile Probation Department for Project Attend (Aiming Toward Truancy Elimination and Non-Attendance Decrease). Once referred to the program the students and parents/guardians appear before the Project Attend Committee which consists of a Director of Juvenile Court Services, school attendance officer, Department of Child Services (DCS), Prosecuting Attorney Office, and Juvenile Probation officer. Principals, counselors and teachers may also attend. The process is informal in which the school presents pertinent information and what the issues may be for non-regular attendance. After this the parents and students address the committee as to what they think the problem appears to be. An open dialogue then proceeds to find the best solution for the problem. An agreement is made on how to best increase attendance and is signed. The case is monitored throughout the year and a positive letter is sent by the committee if the efforts at increasing attendance have been improved. Alternative 2 Expulsion (A2E): is a service provided by the Juvenile Services Center of LaPorte County. This program aims to provide a structured, therapeutic alternative for students who have been recommended for expulsion or have been expelled. A2E will enable students to earn high school credits, identify career goals, develop positive life skills and prepare them to return to their home school ready to achieve academically and avoiding behaviors that resulted in their placement in the program. The Day Reporting Program: is to provide a structured, therapeutic environment for youth that would otherwise be placed in a secure setting. In this program students are shown how to improve their peer relationships, develop skills, and learn to take personal responsibility for their behavior. This is done through participation in activities, attending educational sessions, and meeting behavioral expectations.

Number of Families Served

Please provide an estimate of the number of families served through the Family Court Programming

130-150 families